

Gabor Lukacs, *Kaitai Shinsho: The Single Most Famous Japanese Book of Medicine & Geka Sōden: An Early Very Important Manuscript on Surgery*, Utrecht, Netherlands: Hes & De Graaf Publishers BV, 2008, 286 pp.

**Traditional Chinese Knowledge before the Japanese  
Discovery of Western Science in Gabor Lukacs’  
*Kaitai Shinsho & Geka Sōden***

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This review article has quite a long history, and a few introductory words are in order to clarify my personal relationship with the author of the book and our collaboration, however limited, during the years preceding its publication. In 2002, in the academic library where I had my habits, I met by sheer chance a Hungarian-born French researcher in medical chemistry, recently retired, by the name of Gabor Lukacs. Dr. Lukacs introduced himself as a private collector of rare copies of ancient Japanese medical books looking for a paid collaborator to help him decipher and translate “some documents written in Chinese characters.” I agreed to work for him, primarily out of intellectual interest, also because, then unemployed, I was ready to welcome honest paraprofessional wages. Thus began five years of an irregular collaboration based on overlapping interests and mutual respect. Lukacs soon entrusted me with a selection of color photographs of pages from some of his precious medical books, and asked me to transcribe and translate their contents or the handwritten annotations in Chinese and Sino-Japanese appearing on them. (I was allowed to check some of the books themselves, albeit in Lukacs’ watchful presence.) In 2007, while I was staying in Japan, Lukacs notified me that his draft was nearly completed and, consequently, that my efforts were not needed anymore. Shortly after my return from Japan in the ensuing year, I received a complimentary copy of Lukacs’ book, which I proceeded to read at once. The work displayed

unquestionable erudition on medical and, to some extent, historical matters, but I soon realized, with some disappointment, that Chinese traditional knowledge had not been given a fair treatment by comparison with European science.

Though Lukacs had used—and fully acknowledged as such—my contribution to write most of Part I, Chapter XI of his book, he had never disclosed to me any other chapter at any stage of research or writing, nor did he invite me to participate in the final proofreading. Had he done so, many mistakes could have been detected and corrected before publication. As I read I began to jot down notes and eventually started writing a review. That review—an earlier, much shorter version of the present article—was submitted to *Zinbun: Annals of the Institute for Research in Humanities* (Kyoto University), and reportedly accepted for publication sometime during 2008, before the editorial committee of that Japanese periodical changed its mind on its next meeting, without offering any explanation. Soon after, I left Europe and lost contact with Lukacs. It was not until very recently that, on the occasion of informal exchanges with Dr. Chang Che-Chia 張哲嘉 (Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica), my attention was drawn back to Lukacs' book. Chang encouraged me to take up my manuscript, reshape it, and have it published. I hereby gratefully thank him for reading drafts of the present version.

This review article will first describe the contents of the book (section I), then briefly tackle a cluster of form-related issues mainly concerning consistency, typesetting, and copyediting (section II), then move on to problems with transcriptions and translations of Chinese and Sino-Japanese materials (section III), and, last but not least, focus on the treatment of Chinese traditional knowledge betraying ideological biases and outdated value judgments relevant to what may be called the persistence of 'Orientalism' and 'exoticism' in the field of comparative studies (section IV).<sup>1</sup>

## I

Lukacs' erudite book is the conclusion of nearly a decade of arduous research work. His reader is led through a meticulous bibliographical investigation into one of the earliest phases of Western scientific influence on Eastern Asia, namely the introduction into Japan of European medical knowledge through Dutch works locally adapted into two groundbreaking illustrated manuals of anatomy and surgery. Though the work ultimately

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<sup>1</sup> I use the former term as defined by Edward W. Said (1935-2003) with regard to nineteenth-century English literature in his controversial *Orientalism* (1978), and the latter as studied by White (2004), especially in Chapter I, "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Traditions and Inventions—A Knowledge Becoming," pp. 1-58.

bears the name of a single author, the project was made possible by the collaboration of an international network involving at least forty persons, including librarians, scholars and scientists from various fields beyond medicine, booksellers and private collectors, as well as personal friends, as Lukacs gratefully acknowledges in his Foreword (pp. 15-18).

The book is divided into two parts of unequal length, and its contents are structured as units (called “chapters”) and sub-units of greatly varying size. The chapter sequence is not always self-evident and abrupt changes of subjects are frequent. Each part is devoted to a manual: the first and longer half (pp. 23-180), to the *Kaitai shinsho* 解體新書 (A New Book of Anatomy; Edo, 1774), composed in Japanese *kanbun* 漢文 by Sugita Genpaku 杉田玄白 (1733-1817); the second, shorter half (pp. 181-251), to the *Geka sōden* 外科宗傳 (A Complete Manual of Surgery; Nagasaki, 1706), composed in Chinese by Narabayashi Chinzan 櫛林鎮山 (1648-1711).<sup>2</sup> The Introduction (pp. 19-22) contains basic elements of historiography and bibliography as well as an overview of the historical backdrop against which the appearance of both manuals into Japan took place. The first part has twelve chapters, divided into about four times as many subchapters. Chapter I (pp. 27-37) introduces the main source of the *Kaitai shinsho*, namely the *Tabulae Anatomicae* (Amsterdam, 1731), by Johann Adam Kulmus (1689-1745), an influential textbook on anatomy which was translated into German, Dutch, and French. Leaving Europe behind, Chapter II (pp. 39-48) turns to the Japanese persons involved in the compilation of the *Kaitai shinsho*, and reviews eleven European medical sources owned and used by them. Chapter III (pp. 49-56) is a detailed description of the cover of the Japanese manual, copied from the frontispiece of *Vivae Imagines Partium Corporis Humani* (Antwerp, 1566), itself the Dutch edition of the second edition of Juan Valverde’s (c. 1520-c. 1588) *Historia de la composición del cuerpo humano* (Rome, 1559/1560). Chapter IV (pp. 57-65) covers Chinese traditional knowledge and its “taking root” in Japan—this is where Lukacs gets somewhat off-track, as we shall see in my section IV below. In passing are mentioned the writings of two Jesuits—Johann Schreck or Terrentius (1575-1630) and Dominique Parrenin (1665-1741)—who tried to “introduce Western anatomy into China” but remained “practically ignored and did not have any influence” (pp. 57-58; both figures return on p. 171). Chapter V (pp. 67-68) introduces very briefly the sources available for the history of the “Rangaku movement” in Japan.<sup>3</sup> Chapter VI (pp. 69-74) focuses on a

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise stated, translated titles of Japanese medical sources are those given by Lukacs in his book while those of Chinese sources are mine.

<sup>3</sup> Incidentally, using the (well established apparently) Western neologisms “Rangaku” (which is a Romanization of the Japanese reading of the words 蘭學) and “Rangakusha” (likewise a Romanization of 蘭學者) does not seem absolutely

dissection performed in 1771 by Sugita together with Ogino Gengai 荻野元凱 (1737-1806),<sup>4</sup> an experiment which lead to Sugita's "unconditional and uncritical adherence to and acceptance of Western anatomy" (p. 74), and discusses the general conditions for performing dissections in Japan from this date up to 1869.

Returning to Europe, Chapter VII (pp. 75-82) tries, but fails, to identify the European person (probably a Dutch surgeon) who brought back from Japan the first copy of the *Kaitai shinsho* ever to enter the Western world, a copy which was eventually to be purchased by the French Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) in 1839. Concerned with Japan anew, Chapter VIII (pp. 83-88) presents a tentative printing history of a selection of copies of the *Kaitai shinsho*, a publication venture which unexpectedly turned out to be a success with 2,000 to 2,500 copies (p. 83; "about seven to ten reprints," we read later on, p. 172) produced in Japan from 1774 onwards – all of which, following the Japanese custom of the time, bear the unaltered date of 1774. Chapter IX (pp. 89-93) gives the estimated printing date – late 1774 or early 1775 – of thirteen copies of the manual containing 4 pages of advertisement inserted by booksellers. Chapter X (pp. 95-106) unfolds an inventory, with descriptive notes, of fifty-five copies from (mostly public) collections in Japan, France, England, Germany, and the United States. The longest and arguably the core-chapter in this first part of the book, Chapter XI (pp. 107-164) is devoted to a detailed study and translation of selected manuscript annotations, authored by past owners, from eight copies of the *Kaitai shinsho*, a majority of which occur in the book's preface and introduction. Interestingly, only some of these unique annotations directly concern anatomy: others refer to the early development of 'Dutch studies', or allude to, cite, or quote various Chinese classics, or compare chronology and the calendar in East Asia and Europe, and so on. Some long annotations even appear verbatim on different extant copies, testifying that their impact was as strong as that of the text itself – a "faithful word-for-word transfer of notes" also commonly observed in the West (p. 129). This is also where (p. 107) we are belatedly given the original Japanese title and an English translation of *Kaitai yakuzu* 解體約圖 (Concise Chart of Anatomy), already mentioned on pp. 87 and 90-92, a "short report about the structure of the human body" also by Sugita, which preceded the publication of the *Kaitai shinsho* proper and convinced Sugita that the "risky enterprise" of having his revolutionary work published could be carried on without fear of censorship and retaliation on the part of the Japanese authorities. Closing the first part of the book, Chapter XII (pp. 165-180) tries to evaluate the

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necessary; both terms could very well be simply translated as 'Dutch studies' and 'those engaged in Dutch studies' respectively.

<sup>4</sup> The Japanese characters for the name Ogino Gengai are not given in Lukacs' book, as well as those for Irako Mitsuaki (see below).

impact of the *Kaitai shinsho* on Japanese medicine, first in the general context of “disastrous historical and economic events” (p. 166) which immediately followed its publication. In addition to the handwritten materials examined in the preceding chapter, which seem to be unparalleled in pre-modern Japanese medical literature, references to the *Kaitai shinsho* in other sources—such as minutely detailed illustrated reports of dissection—tend to confirm its immediate influence. Its medium-term impact, however, seems to have been quite limited, considering the fact that a majority of Japanese medical practitioners still openly adhered to Chinese traditional knowledge during the nineteenth century. Only in the waning years of that century did the Japanese government reject Chinese medicine and begin to support Western medical knowledge exclusively.

Devoted to the *Geka sōden*, a work not found in any public collection in Europe according to Lukacs (p. 219), the second part of the book has thirteen chapters, not subdivided except for chapter VIII (which has thirteen subchapters numbered VIII.-1 to VIII.-4.9). Beginning in Europe, Chapter I (pp. 185-187) introduces the French surgeon Ambroise Paré (1510-1590), who acted as royal surgeon to four consecutive French kings, and his collected works (*Œuvres*) in 26 volumes, first printed in 1575 and subsequently reprinted several times. Chapter II (pp. 189-190) introduces the Dutch edition of Paré’s collected works, last printed in 1625, and offers basic information on Dutch surgical knowledge in the seventeenth century.

Moving to Japan, Chapter III (pp. 191-193) deals with the introduction of the Dutch edition of Paré’s *Œuvres* into this country, in all likelihood before the end of the seventeenth century, then presents a few Japanese works on surgery “not unlike their Chinese model” (p. 193)—but what this “Chinese model” was remains unspecified. The earliest work listed by Lukacs in this inventory is the *Geka sōden*, first published in 1706—nearly seven decades before the publication of the *Kaitai shinsho*. Chapters IV and V (pp. 195-202) introduce the author of the *Geka sōden*, Narabayashi Chinzan, an interpreter turned physician, and compare his manual to Paré’s collected works. Like Kanbara Horishi before him (1992), Lukacs offers evidence that, for the illustrations of the chapter on the “treatments of wounds,” Narabayashi drew inspiration from the *Armamentarium Chirurgicum* (Ulm, 1655) by Johannes Schultes (1595-1645), alias Scultetus, a German surgeon, rather than from the *Œuvres* of Paré, whose name does not even appear in the manual. Consisting of the long “Table 1” (pp. 203-207), Chapter VI identifies the probable European sources of the illustrations related to the treatment of wounds in *Geka sōden*, with an appended series of juxtaposed illustrations exemplifying graphic similarities between the former and latter works (pp. 208-213). Similarly, Chapter VII (pp. 215-217) now compares the general structure and selected features from the first part of *Geka sōden* with its known Chinese source, Chen Shigong’s 陳實

功 (1555-1636) *Waike zhengzong* 外科正宗 (Principles of Surgery)—or, in Japanese reading, Chin Jikko's *Geka seisō*—dated 1617.<sup>5</sup> The apex of the second part of the book, Chapter VIII (pp. 219-234) describes the structure and contents of a dozen hand-written sources, including the *Geka sōden* proper and more or less complete manuscripts bearing different titles but believed to be derived from it. Lukacs unfolds long tables proposing reverse identifications of the original Latin names of Narabayashi's Japanese transcription of medicines ("Table II"; see also my section III below) and various oils, ointments and plasters ("Table III").

Chapter IX (pp. 235-239) consists mainly of a translation of a section on "wounds caused by sharp-edged weapons (swords)" (see also my section III) in the *Geka kunmō zui* 外科訓蒙図彙 (Illustrated Initiation to Surgery;<sup>6</sup> Kyoto: 1769; preface dated 1767), by Irako Mitsuaki or Kōken 伊朗子光顕 (1737-1798), a Japanese translation of one of *Geka sōden*'s chapters. Chapter X (pp. 240-244) returns to the *Geka sōden* and offers some evidence that the textual sources of the chapter on "head wounds" therein must have included Scultetus' *Armamentarium Chirurgicum*. Chapter XI (pp. 245-248) attempts at socially and historically contextualizing Narabayashi's work—of which about fifty manuscript copies may have been produced in Japan—and stresses the difficulty to estimate its impact due to the lack of first-hand reports on how contemporaries reacted to its publication. The short Chapters XII (pp. 249-250) and XIII (p. 251) provide further remarks on the influence of Ambroise Paré on Japanese medicine up to the twentieth century. The book has no conclusion.

An appendix on "The Japanese chronological system" (pp. 253-254) gives the correspondence between Japanese reign-periods and the Western calendar, from 1570 to 1868 (see also my section IV below). The "Selected Bibliography" (pp. 255-278) brings together primary and secondary sources in Western and Eastern languages, omitting all Chinese and/or Japanese characters. An Index (pp. 279-286) closes the volume.

## II

Though the general appearance of the book suggests at first glance that its layout has been produced with extreme care, minor defects somewhat impede reading pleasure. The general format for transcriptions, English translations, and the author's subsequent personal comments is not fixed, even within a given chapter. Paragraph opening indents seem to have been

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<sup>5</sup> The title of this work is not translated in Lukacs' book.

<sup>6</sup> This translation of the title (p. 235) is of course more accurate than that quoted from Janette Doe on the same page ("Secret instruction for surgery"), with which Lukacs rightly disagrees, and than "Illustrations for the Practice of Surgery" given earlier by Lukacs himself (p. 171).

randomly distributed; many are simply missing while those following empty lines appear to be unnecessary. Numerous typos betray hasty proofreading: “B.C. 202” instead of 206 for the opening year of the Han 漢 dynasty (p. 57); “a unsigned print” (p. 61); “more of less” (p. 167); “haemmorhage” (p. 243); etc. Notes often appear both as marginalia and footnotes, tending to saturate page space, and their numbering is not strictly linear. The reader sometimes must browse through pages to locate a given note, and one note at least appears to be missing (n. 53, p. 233). Another poor authorial or editorial choice was to restrict the use of italics to figure captions and a few subtitles within the structure of the sole main text, which is all the more awkward in a bibliographic work featuring occurrences of book titles on virtually every page, as well as numerous Romanized Sino-Japanese and Chinese phrases; keeping to an example, though the sentence “both Kaitai Hatsumō and Kaizō Zufu copied several illustrations from Kaitai shinsho” (p. 167, original capitalization) seems at first to be about two persons borrowing visual material from a book: it is in fact about the same deed performed by two books.

In addition to forty-six beautiful plates, mostly in color, the book offers a large selection of transcriptions from primary sources. Some of these materials are fully transcribed, then translated, while others are simply translated, without any transcription—which criterion, if any, presided over the insertion or omission of transcriptions is unclear. For example, some readers will find it frustrating not to be allowed to compare the long annotated translation found on pp. 136-137 with its source, a 15-column, 410-word text, according to Lukacs, while a different, much shorter version of the same text is fully transcribed on the ensuing page (p. 138).

Whatever the culture and era under consideration, handwritten Sinitic words often assume graphic variants, which may be difficult to decipher and are occasionally missing from the fonts available on modern computers. For this reason, special care should be taken when typesetting, then proofreading a document containing transcriptions of such words. In Lukacs’ book, the word 魯, which is a common graphic simplification for 魯 (Chin. *lu*), was wrongly typeset as “曾” twice (p. 125, item 1, *b*, column 6; item 5, *a*, column 2); the word “日” (Chin. *ri*) was misprinted for “日” (Chin. *yue*), a very common mistake in ancient as well as modern documents (p. 141, Leaf 1V, 2, *a*); and the penultimate word in the Japanese title *Geka sōden*, 傳, was wrongly typed “傳” (p. 192), another timeless error.

As far as Chinese names and book titles are concerned, the official Chinese *pinyin* transcription system was adopted by the author or the publisher, and yet it has not been applied consistently, as witnessed by a few isolated Wade-Giles transcriptions: “Wu-li hsiao-chih” 物理小識 (p. 134, n. 25), which should read *Wuli xiaozhi*, and “Chih-fang wai chi” 職方外紀 (p. 149), which should read *Zhifang waiji*.

## III

As the above summary of the book contents has tried to make clear, the main originality of Lukacs' bibliographical investigation is its focus on a corpus of marginalia written by past owners of copies of the *Kaitai shinsho*. Consequently, the heuristic impact of the work depends extensively on the accuracy of the transcriptions and translations provided for these annotations. In this regard, consistency in translation choices should have been one of the basic rules to follow. A good example of such fluctuating translations is offered by the disyllable 金瘡 (Jap. *kinsō*). The compound, which I would translate simply as 'puncture wound,' is alternatively rendered as "wounds" (p. 219), arguably too vague; as "war wounds" (p. 232), over-interpretative; and even as the phrase "wounds by sharp-edged weapons" (p. 233), not inadequate perhaps but too long, just like another phrase, "wounds caused by sharp-edged weapons," used to translate the homophonous and synonymous disyllable 金創 from the *Geka kinmō zui* (p. 235). Another disyllable, 脫肛 (Jap. *dakkō*), appears twice in the list of the 36 chapter titles from the *Geka sōden* (items no. 16 and no. 22); first translated as "Gangrene," it becomes "Prolapse of the rectum" (p. 216), suggesting that the transcription of item no. 16 has been corrupted – and perhaps other items in the list.

Several groups of textual occurrences from a beautiful manuscript in Chinese of a *Lunyu xu* 論語序 (Preface to the Analects of Confucius), reproduced p. 124 (fig. 16), are transcribed and translated on p. 125. Four deciphering problems remain in Lukacs' book, marked by the substitution of a question mark for each unidentified Chinese word. The common (Chinese) source of these occurrences, the *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han),<sup>7</sup> could have been used to collate the manuscript and easily fill these four gaps:

- 3, c, column 4: The missing word in the Chinese official title is 秉, a graphic variant for 承, here used for *cheng* 丞.
- 4, e, column 4: The missing word in the Chinese patronymic is 賢, a graphic simplification for *xian* 賢. 'Counsellor-in-chief Wei Xian' 丞相韋賢 is indeed mentioned in the *Hanshu*, chap. 30, p. 1717, chap. 80, p. 3311, and chap. 88, p. 3618.<sup>8</sup>
- 4, c, column 4: The missing word is *hou* 侯. Xiahou is a well-known ancient Chinese family name, and the earliest mention of a Xiahou Sheng

<sup>7</sup> This is the main Chinese historiographical source for the years 206 BC to 24 AD. Its core chapters were completed by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92 AD), after whose death additional materials – in particular some of the monographs or thematic treatises – were completed under the editorship of his sister Ban Zhao 班昭 (49-116 AD).

<sup>8</sup> For the meaning of the title *chengxiang* 丞相, see Hucker (1985), p. 126, no. 483.



following the title 'Great Mentor of the Heir Apparent' 太子太傅夏侯勝 is to be found in the *Hanshu*, chap. 74, p. 3144.<sup>9</sup>

- 4, g, column 7: The puzzling glyph, combining the radical 歹 with 即, would at first sight appear to be an incorrectly written *qing* 卿. However, just as our manuscript does, the *Hanshu* mentions the 'Prince Yang of Langye' 琅邪王陽 together with a 'Yong Sheng, from Jiaodong' 膠東庸生 (*Hanshu*, chap. 81, p. 3348). Consequently, the mysterious word should be read as *yang* 陽.

Inaccuracies in the translation of the 118-word Sino-Japanese text given on p. 138 have led the author to a few misunderstandings. To begin with the first line, two words (其後, literally 'afterwards') linking chronologically the first sentence to the next remain untranslated. From this disruption in the narrative sequence of the source proceeds Lukacs' suspicion that the unnamed annotator made a "surprising confusion" (see p. 138, n. a). In fact, rather than confusing persons, the annotator reported two theories concerning the foundation of 'Dutch studies' in Japan: the first theory names as the founder Mito Seizan-kō 水戸西山公, whom Lukacs identifies as Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628-1700), while, according to the annotator, contemporary Japanese scholars in Dutch studies would rather regard Aoki Kon'yō 青木昆陽 (1695-1769) as the founder of their discipline.

The third sentence states that Arai Hakuseki 荒井白石 (1657-1725) 'resumed the study of this knowledge,' as one might translate the phrase 復修此學, which is inaccurately rendered in the book as "that knowledge was taught to Arai Hakuseki." (In the transcription, 'Hakuseki' appears once as "白石," once as "百石," but it is not stated whether this variation exists in the original handwritten annotation or not.)

Instead of the translation of the fourth sentence, we read, between parentheses: "the meaning of the following twelve characters, underlined in the above text, remained ambiguous and unclear to us." Indeed, thirteen words—not twelve—are underlined in the transcription of the Sino-Japanese text; but the word 島 (Jap. *shima*) from the place name Tanegashima 種子島 should not be included in the so-called unclear passage. The remaining twelve words (年十九已<sup>10</sup> 通其國學十八等官, corresponding to the underlined section in the translation below), together with the next sentence, may be translated thus: [The newly disembarked Giovanni Sidotti,] 'aged nineteen, was already well versed in his national

<sup>9</sup> For the translation of the title *taizi taifu* 太子太傅, see Hucker (1985), p. 485, no. 6256.

<sup>10</sup> Lukacs' transcription, "巳", is here certainly erroneous, even if a common variant.

studies.<sup>11</sup> An eighteenth-rank official ordered Hakuseki to investigate the truth of the matter'. (Rather than "Hakuseki interrogated (the foreigner).")

In the seventh sentence, the phrase rendered as "very clear" is more evocative in the original text: 'as if he pointed at [the world] in the palm of his hand' 如指諸掌, a formula traditionally regarded as a literary allusion to the *Lunyu*.<sup>12</sup> The eighth sentence, simply rendered as "Kentoku-in ordered Aoki Kon'yō to translate Rangaku," conveys more details in the original text, which reports clearly that Aoki Kon'yō was ordered 'to become a Translator official and to study Dutch learning' 就譯官學蘭學.

The last chapters of the Blondelet copy of *Geka sōden* (see p. 223, end of Table II) deal with categories of "Chinese medicines" called "essence" 露水 (Jap. *rosui*), literally 'dew,' "herbal water" 草水 (Jap. *sōsui*), and "honey" 蜜 (Jap. *mitsu*). The first two categories in all likelihood refer to pharmaceutical distillates or macerations of botanical origin, the third one to honey-based syrups. A list of fifteen items in Sino-Japanese—three chapter titles and twelve medicine names—was transcribed by Lukacs, but only the first item in the list has been translated ("method of preparation of rose-water"). The entire series could have been rendered as follows:

1. 露水製法: methods for processing essence.
  - 1.1. 金銀花露: honeysuckle-flower essence.
  - 1.2. □柏葉露: literally, '(?) cypress-leaf essence.'<sup>13</sup>
  - 1.3. 松葉露: literally, 'pine-leaf essence.'<sup>14</sup>
  - 1.4. 茨花露: briar-flower essence.
  - 1.5. 梅花露: plum-flower essence.
  - 1.6. 橘花露: tangerine-flower essence.
2. 草水製法: methods for processing herbal water.
  - 2.1. 薊葉根水: thistle leaf and root water.
  - 2.2. 茴香水: fennel (or aniseed) water.
  - 2.3. 車前水: plantain water.
  - 2.4. 肉桂水: cinnamon water.
  - 2.5. 薄荷水: mint water.
3. 蜜製法: method for processing honey.
  - 3.1. □草蜜: literally, '(?)-grass honey.'<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> That is, the classic studies of his own country, Italy.

<sup>12</sup> English translation by Lau (1992), Book III, pp. 22-23.

<sup>13</sup> The first word is missing. Perhaps a kind of cypress named 側葉柏 or 扁葉柏.

<sup>14</sup> Perhaps one among many kinds of flowers with the compound 松葉 in their name.

<sup>15</sup> The first word is missing.

Further transcription and/or translation problems include:

- P. 143: Since the names “Ma Xuantai” and “Hua Boren” in the translation do not exist in the original annotation, both should be marked (typically between parentheses or square brackets) as being inserted by the translator.

- P. 154: In the translation of Leaf 8V (“male genital organs”), the word missing from the Japanese phonetic transcription of Steven Blankaart’s (1650-1702) name (“蒲郎加口都”) is 爾. Here this word is naturally homophonous with 兒, a graphic variant for the graph 兒 used in a variant transcription of the same name, 蒲郎加兒都 (mentioned p. 155).

- P. 243: The sentence ‘必可有血走, 不可驚恐哉’ has been misinterpreted as a warning about “the danger” of hemorrhage. It should rather be seen as an indication that bleeding is very likely to occur, but that there is no need to be afraid if it does.

#### IV

The preceding sections already suggest that, when Lukacs did not restrict himself to factual information relevant to modern Western medicine, including anatomy and surgery, his mastery of the contents of the admirable books and manuscripts he has found and, in some cases, purchased in various locations around the world, remained limited, hence his heavy reliance on the transcriptions and translations performed by his international collaborators and Japanese friends. Yet far more prejudicial to the overall quality of the work than these technical shortcomings are Lukacs’ obvious clumsiness and passé ideological biases when attempting to position European knowledge in a non-Western setting. The few following examples will illustrate how Lukacs ultimately failed to conceive of a comparative methodology which would have brought into historical perspective the metaphoric encounter of two major paradigms unprepared to confront each other.

The concept of 年號 (Chin. *nianhao*; Jap. *nengō*), obscurely rendered as “period of era” (?) on p. 140, remains poorly explained to the lay reader in the main text until a welcome appendix. This appendix, however, could have added that the *nianhao* system originated in China, centuries before the Japanese *nengō* system started in 645 AD. *Nianhao/nengō* is the name of an era sometimes coinciding with a sovereign’s whole reign, sometimes with a part of the reign only. Back to the translation on pp. 139-140, not only is the sentence “the second year of Genshi or Kanheitei (in Japanese reading) in China” unclear, it is also misleading. For if ‘Genshi’ is indeed the Japanese reading of a Chinese reign-period, Yuanshi 元始, which in traditional Chinese chronology roughly corresponds to the first five years AD, ‘Kanheitei,’ however, introduced in the translation as if it were an alternative name for Yuanshi, is in fact the Japanese reading of the phrase

漢平帝 (Ch. Han Pingdi), literally ‘Emperor Ping of the Han [dynasty]’. Indeed the reign of this Chinese emperor did coincide with the Yuanshi (or Genshi) reign-period, but there is otherwise no semantic, lexical, or linguistic identity between both occurrences.

The transcultural approach championed by the author would have required a balanced knowledge of the compared phenomena and, at the very least, an equally fair treatment of them. Regrettably, both occasionally vanish from the present work, especially when the author—a prominent European scientist with an exclusively Western background—comes face to face with some traditional features of Chinese culture. This becomes truly manifest in Chapter IV, “Anatomical knowledge in Japan before the Western influence,” where the author attempts to comment on a well-known Chinese document reproduced on p. 59 (fig. 9), the *Neijing tu* 內景圖 (Illustration of the Inner Landscape)—a title not translated by Lukacs—and on a Japanese document more or less derived from it, the *Inshoku yōjō kagami* 飲食養生鑒 (Mirror of Drinking and Eating to Keep Maintaining Life), reproduced on p. 62 (fig. 10).<sup>16</sup> By singling out every Western element lacking on both pictures (such as nerves, lymphatic vessels, and so forth) and pointing out all the “fanciful”—as the author writes twice, about the shape of the bones (p. 58) and the depiction of the pericardium (p. 60)—graphic renditions therein from his anachronistic and retrospective modern vantage point, Lukacs obliterates the symbolical and philosophical dimension of a unique, centuries-old knowledge. Beside conventional references to a few secondary sources, which one wonders if the author ever bothered to read, a better understanding of this knowledge might have enabled him to add substance to those critical pages, rather than merely unfolding a descriptive catalogue of what he cursorily calls elsewhere “mistaken ideas about the constitution of the human body” (Introduction, p. 20).

Elsewhere, rather than an English translation, Lukacs chose to render the Chinese phrase 內對丹田 from the *Neijing tu* (fig. 9, item 26) by a question mark (p. 60). This again may strike the reader as betraying a lack of interest in non-Western knowledge on the part of the author, or perhaps his unwillingness, if not inability, to deal with notions not strictly materialistic and mechanistic. The neglected phrase simply means: ‘Inside [the body], facing [this point, is located] the Cinnabar Field.’ A fundamental concept in traditional Chinese physiology, abundantly documented in primary sources and studied by modern scholars, Cinnabar Field 丹田 (Chin. *dantian*; Jap. *tanden*) also played an important role in various psycho-physiological practices such as meditation, visualization, and breathing techniques. Three such Cinnabar Fields came to be located within the

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<sup>16</sup> On the *Neijing tu*, see Despeux (2008).

human body—respectively in the abdomen, the heart, and the brain, with possible variants—but the fact that they were “devoid of material counterparts” has long been acknowledged by contemporary scholars in the field of Chinese studies.<sup>17</sup>

In the same passage, we are told that “nerves were totally unknown” (p. 58) or again that “the existence of nerves was not even suspected in Chinese medicine” (p. 58, n. 21). Then, further on, we meet the disyllable 經絡 (Chin. *jingluo*; Jap. *keiraku*), used by the Japanese to translate into their own language the newly imported European concept (p. 224). Firstly, ‘nervous system’ would be more accurate than “nerves,” given that ‘nerve’ was translated by yet another disyllable, 神經 (Chin. *shenjing*; Jap. *shinkei*), as Dr. Alain Briot informs the reader in his Preface (p. 13). Secondly, the fact the disyllable *jingluo/keiraku* has had a long history before being used to translate a European word into Japanese is totally ignored by Lukacs. In traditional Chinese physiology and medicine, it refers to an energetic system of ‘main conduits’ or ‘cardinal tracts’ (經 *jing/kei*, often called, albeit improperly, “meridians”) and ‘network vessels’ or ‘reticular tracts’ (絡 *luo/raku*) linking the external (or superficial) regions of the body to its internal parts.<sup>18</sup> The system is attested to in ancient Chinese medical sources dating back to nearly two thousand years before Japanese physicians ever heard of European physiology. It may be added that this energetic network is also an integral part of the theoretical background of acupuncture, a probably very ancient medical art still practiced inside and outside Asian communities worldwide.<sup>19</sup>

Had this pre-modern East-Asian knowledge not been disregarded, the author would easily have completed translation of sentences like “various types of pains resulting from wounds affecting the muscles, the bones, causing paralysis and involving 寒溫 (?)” (p. 224). Here, the problematic compound (Chin. *hanwen*; Jap. *kan'on*) may be literally translated as ‘cold and warm’. In the Chinese medical tradition, these words designate pathogenic factors, respectively ‘cold pathogens’—provoking disorder characterized by contractions, stagnations, chills, and so on—and ‘warm pathogens’—responsible for diseases characterized by inflammation, fever, thirst, and the like. Naturally, this binary theory is fully compatible with the 陰陽 (Chin. *yinyang*; Jap. *in'yō*) theory, pathogenic cold being viewed as a product of excessive *yin* activity and pathogenic warmth as an effect of

<sup>17</sup> Quoting p. 302 of Pregadio (2008). See also the classic essay by Henri Maspero, “Les procédés de ‘nourrir le principe vital’ dans la religion taoïste ancienne,” reprinted in Maspero (1971), pp. 479-589.

<sup>18</sup> For discussions of the corresponding Western terminology, see Sivin (1987), pp. 133-147; Hsu (1999), p. 172, n. 22, p. 252.

<sup>19</sup> See Unschuld (1985), pp. 73-83 (“Structure and Function of the Organism”) and 92-99 (“Classic Acupuncture: Origins and Therapeutic Principles”).

excessive *yang* activity. (To be fair, *yin* and *yang* are briefly dealt with in notes 43–45, p. 72.) Additionally, the same disyllable 寒溫 may also refer to the ‘cold-warm syndrome,’ a complex morbid condition combining pathologic coldness and warmth occurring simultaneously in distinct parts of the body. Already during the first century AD, Wang Chong 王充 (27–c. 100) in his *Lunheng* 論衡 (Doctrines Evaluated) critically discussed the validity of the cold/warm dialectics in a broader correlative context, including physiology and medicine, but also cosmology, politics, and metaphysics.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, still in the Chinese medical tradition, the trisyllable 保生湯 (Chin. *baosheng tang*; Jap. *hoseitō*), tagged “not clear” by the author and not translated (p. 238), designates a medicinal preparation for parturient women. Its name means, literally, ‘decoction to preserve life.’ A dozen different recipes for this preparation are attested to in various sources, among which Chen Ziming’s 陳自明 (fl. 1237–1271) *Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方 (Compendium of Effective Prescriptions for Women), sometimes dubbed the most famous medical work of its time, dated 1237 – centuries before the era covered by Lukacs’ book.<sup>21</sup>

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Due less to its minor flaws than to the disciplinary limitations of its author and his regrettable Europe-centered viewpoint, Gabor Lukacs’ *Kaitai Shinsho & Geka Sōden* will perhaps not be remembered as a milestone in bibliographic approaches to the comparative history of scientific traditions East and West. The book suffers from two types of imbalance: First, from an imbalanced assessment of two cultures. Nowhere does the author point in detail to some of the numberless “errors” and “fanciful” ideas of Western medicine as he does in the case of the Chinese medical tradition. In all, Lukacs alludes—once and without elaborating—to “all those experienced, well-prepared Western anatomists who kept recording errors for centuries” (p. 72) and concedes that “pre-Vesalian Western anatomy was not distinctively superior to its Eastern counterparts” (p. 191).<sup>22</sup> In two notes, he remarks that, “before 1510, very little reflected scientific truth in Western anatomical treatises” (p. 73, n. 57) and that, “except for surgery and the fight against the mortal effects of smallpox, Western medicine was

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<sup>20</sup> English translation by Forke (1962), Chapter XXI, “On Heat and Cold (*Han-wên*),” pp. 278–284.

<sup>21</sup> Various editions of this important source are mentioned in Ng (2013); the work itself is analyzed in Chapter Three, “Envisioning Women’s Medicine: Chen Ziming,” pp. 164–235.

<sup>22</sup> The adjective ‘Vesalian’ refers to Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564), author of the influential *Suorum de Humani Corporis Fabrica Librorum Epitome* (Basel, 1543).

as helpless in the early nineteenth century against most diseases as its Sino-Japanese counterpart" (p. 74, n. 69). By and large, compared with the Chinese medical tradition and Asian medical figures, Western medical knowledge and Western scientists are given a positive image throughout the book. Second, the book suffers from an imbalanced structure between its two parts and their constitutive chapters—the shortest, in particular single- and two-page ones, should have been combined into larger units. Merging both parts into a single one and following chronology consistently would have benefited the overall clarity and strength of the argument.<sup>23</sup> But did Lukacs try to show anything at all in this book, apart from beautiful pictures of rare manuscripts interspersed with transcriptions and translations produced for him by his collaborators and friends, and cliché developments on the supposed superiority of early modern European minds over their retarded Asian counterpart? There is hardly any substantial discovery in the entire book, apart from limited elaborations on results reached by earlier scholars (acknowledged) and a few hypotheses, and the author must often confess that "further research" would be needed (pp. 78, 82, 105) or that "data" are "lacking" (pp. 129, 191) to reach any conclusion. What remains is a mainly descriptive, richly illustrated album, pervaded with amateurish enthusiasm and the patronizing naïveté of our grandfathers marveling at exotic otherness ("the legendary politeness of the Japanese people," p. 121). Outside of academic milieus, the book may provide the educated public with inspirational reading—some first-person narrative chapters unfold like a bibliophilistic detective novel. In view of its visual quality, it is likely to become a collector's piece. But it is to be feared that it will fuel the essentialist views of less educated readers.

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<sup>23</sup> An introductory part could have presented early modern European medicine and its leading figures, then, by contrast, the Sino-Japanese medical tradition in contemporary Japan. The next part would have dealt with the early historical development of 'Dutch studies', leading to biographical summaries of the main Japanese figures involved—first Narabayashi, then Sugita, "the tie connecting the two works" according to Briot's Preface (p. 13). A dense analytical part, core of the book, would then have covered their respective works, beginning with the earlier *Geka sōden*, then the later *Kaitai shinsho* (rather than the other way round). A concluding part, preferably more thoroughly researched than the corresponding current units, would have discussed how both works impacted pre-modern Japan. As for the closing note on Paré in today's Japan, too short to be more than anecdotal, it should appear together with the existing appendices.

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